

***Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park
Federal Advisory Commission Meeting***

March 20, 2014

Warren County Government Center
220 North Commerce Avenue
Front Royal, Virginia

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| 1) General Introductions | |
| Patrick Farris, Chair, Advisory Commission | |
| 2) Adoption of Minutes | Patrick Farris |
| 3) Update – Status of FAC Members/Nomination Process | Jim Northup |
| 4) Update – New park brochure | Amy Bracewell |
| 5) Update – Highway directional signs | Amy Bracewell |
| 6) Update – Upcoming Season Operations | Amy Bracewell |
| 7) Update – Shared graphic identity | Amy Bracewell |
| 8) Update – Planning/Development of park trails | Amy Bracewell |
| 11) Update – Route 11 bridge project | Jim Northup |
| 12) I-81 Bridge Replacement | Jim Northup |
| 13) Update - 150th Anniversary planning | Amy Bracewell |
| 14) Planning for future land protection | Amy Bracewell |

Meeting Notes

Commission members in attendance: Jim Northup, Designated Federal Official (DFO); John Adamson, Belle Grove, Inc.; Carl Bernhards, Middletown; Amy Bracewell, NPS; Patrick Farris, Warren County and chair; Stanley M. Hirschberg, Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation (CCBF); Eric Lawrence, Frederick County; Pam Sheets, Shenandoah County; Rob Nieweg, National Trust for Historic Preservation; and Richard Redmon, Strasburg

Commission members absent: Katie Donahue, USFS; Jeanne Frink, Commonwealth of Virginia; and Nicholas Picerno, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SVBF).

Others in attendance: Matt Armstrong, *Winchester Star*; David Blount, landowner; Paul Coussan, Civil War Trust; Bob Grogg, NPS volunteer; Kristen Laise, Belle Grove, Inc.; and Dave Stegmaier, District Office, U.S. Representative Frank Wolf.

Chair Patrick Farris opened the meeting at 8:37 a.m. Farris asked that everyone present give their name and affiliation.

The meeting notes from December 19, 2013, were approved with corrections.

Jim Northup announced that the election of new officers would wait until all new commission members had been approved and seated.

Amy Bracewell reported that the new park brochure has been sent to the printer early in March. The print run is for 10,000 copies and they will be delivered early in the summer.

Virginia Logos has reviewed the contract for the production of the highway signs and approved it. The installation should be sometime in July. The location for a possible sign on I-66 is being submitted to VDOT; a decision should be forthcoming soon.

Bracewell has spoken with a designer about whether she can take on the identity assignment. If this approach does not work, then a contract will be sent out for bids.

On March 22, 2014, the visitor contact station will be open seven days a week, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Ranger programs will begin March 23, with daily programs getting underway in June. Belle Grove, Hupps Hill and CCBF will also be going to full schedule around the same time. All parties aim to have better communications about their operations, and all will count all visitors. Last year saw 48,000 visitors. We will be watching closely this year to see if the impact of the signs can be determined.

Trail work has been delayed several times by the weather. All hope that it can get going during April. The park staff will meet with Ursula Lemanski to get the report and planning going. Katie Donahue will be assisting to give a forester's view of the project. The Shenandoah NP trail crew will arrive on March 21 to flag and line out the Vermont Monument trail. At this time the trail will not be accessible. This first effort will be for a cleared and level pathway, but with no extreme cutting or paving. Making this trail accessible at sometime in the future will remain on the table.

The U.S. 11 bridge reconstruction remains a concern. VDOT will meet with the key partners, and all are hoping that the letters to VDOT and the concerns of the SVBF will be heard. A meeting in the Staunton office of VDOT is anticipated sometime in April.

Replacement of the northbound bridge on I-81, though farther in the future than the U.S. 11 bridge, also has concerns. A letter has been sent to VDOT that the lands that VDOT proposes taking for the replacement were purchased with Land and Water Conservation Funds, and such purchases come with restrictions. The National Trust is seeking

consulting party status for approaching VDOT on this work and urges all other key partners to do the same. Such status will give those who have it a greater voice in the discussions.

Planning for the 150th events proceeds with meetings taking place monthly. Almost 500 people showed up for the History Mobile at Lord Fairfax CC in February. Director Jonathan Jarvis, Representative Frank Wolf, and Governor Terry McAuliffe have all been invited to the local events commemorating the 150th battle of Cedar Creek. The planners are working on shared ticketing, raising awareness of the events, a lecture series, and working with the Smithsonian Institution. Belle Grove, CCBF, and Kernstown are asking for \$55,000 from Frederick County, \$10,000 from Winchester, \$1,000 from Middletown, and \$3,000 from Strasburg to assist in the events that will be planned. All these entities insist on and require accurate reporting of how the money is used and the amount of matching funds that are raised. The park is also working with the Shenandoah Search and Rescue and Potomac Appalachian Trail Club to plan an anniversary associated trail hike to Signal Knob. The partners are also working on an education day for area fourth graders that will take place on Friday on the Belle Grove property.

The park, the key partners, and the Civil War Trust have been having ongoing discussions on future land protection. Any future land preservation through acquisition depends solely on willing sellers. The group talked about the high value properties that need to be protected, the role of easements, which avenues for preservation need to be encouraged, and working to identify what each individual landowner's concerns are. The FAC can provide valuable advice on preservation outside the park boundaries. The group will meet with quarry officials at some future date. The park and partners express their thanks to the Civil War Trust for its vast experience in the field and for all the land that the Trust has purchased.

There was no new business.

The next meeting will be June 19 at the Strasburg Town Offices.

Patrick Farris adjourned the meeting at 9:38 a.m.